

## Such Singing in the Wild Branches

It was spring  
and I finally heard him  
among the first leaves—  
then I saw him clutching the limb

in an island of shade  
with his red-brown feathers  
all trim and neat for the new year.  
First, I stood still

and thought of nothing.  
Then I began to listen.  
Then I was filled with gladness—  
and that's when it happened,

when I seemed to float,  
to be, myself, a wing or a tree—  
and I began to understand  
what the bird was saying,

and the sands in the glass  
stopped  
for a pure white moment  
while gravity sprinkled upward

like rain, rising,  
and in fact  
it became difficult to tell just what it was that was  
singing—  
it was the thrush for sure, but it seemed

not a single thrush, but himself, and all his brothers,  
and also the trees around them,  
as well as the gliding, long-tailed clouds  
in the perfect blue sky—all of them

were singing.  
And, of course, so it seemed,  
so was I.  
Such soft and solemn and perfect music doesn't last

For more than a few moments.  
It's one of those magical places wise people  
like to talk about.  
One of the things they say about it, that is true,

is that, once you've been there,  
you're there forever.  
Listen, everyone has a chance.  
Is it spring, is it morning?

Are there trees near you,  
and does your own soul need comforting?  
Quick, then—open the door and fly on your heavy  
feet; the song may already be drifting away.

-Mary Oliver